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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES
COOPERATING



STATES RELATIONS SERVICE
OFFICE OF EXTENSION WORK NORTH AND WEST
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THIS LOOKS GOOD

LAND CLEARING CONTEST

A Modern Version of the Old-Fashioned "Logging-Bee".

The contest idea appeals to grown-ups as well as to boys and girls and can often be utilized to good advantage in county extension work. In Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Oregon and Washington particularly, there is a large amount of cut-over land. Clearing the stumps from this land presents a problem which is receiving an increasing amount of attention each year. In Rusk County, Wisconsin, Hugh M. Jones, county agent, organized a contest among the settlers with good result. County Agent Leader, Wojta gives the following description of it in his annual report:

"The purpose of the contest was:

1. To stimulate land clearing among settlers.
2. To have an organization of businessmen with financial backing in order that:
 - (a) Land clearing materials could be handled in carload lots.
 - (b) An Assistant to the county agent could be hired.
 - (c) A stronger feeling between town and county might be developed.

"The contest idea involved a very great undertaking but it was thought that a contest would probably help create interest and assure the success of the project. Three hundred and fifty farmers were entered in the clearing contest and it was the duty of the contest director who worked under the county agent to keep a check on the work of the contestants from beginning of the contest to the end. To begin with the land of each contestant had to be checked up on the following points:

1. Cleared land.
2. Amount of land to be brushed, stumped, and broken.
3. Difficulty of brushing, stumping, and breaking.

"This checking of each contestant had to be done as early in the spring as possible and at the same time, interest in the contest had to be kept up. To accomplish the latter, the county press was used and in addition bulletins were published by the county agent.

"A countywide drive to increase the consumption of dynamite was made, since its use is the most popular for stumping. The orders of farmers were bunched and explosives were sold through the local dealers at a margin of from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cent per pound to the dealers. During the season 20 carloads of explosives were handled, an increase of 115 per cent over the year of 1919.

"During the summer months, land clearing demonstrations, ditching demonstrations, and land clearing schools were held to assist those not familiar with the use of explosives. Many of the new settlers coming into upper Wisconsin are from a prairie country and do not understand how to handle explosives. In fact, many of these settlers look upon a stick of dynamite much as a Yankee soldier looked upon a hand grenade, i.e., to get it out of his hands quick and throw it far. These new settlers needed to be taught. The contest director took up this branch of the work during the summer. Ditching with dynamite was new to many and in every case where a farmer was shown how to ditch by the use of dynamite he was more than pleased with it as he found it easier and cheaper.

"During October, the land clearing contest was brought to a close and the 1920 clearing of each contestant was checked. On November 6th at the County Seat Lady-smith, a "round-up day" was held. Over 1200 farmers attended and 1000 were fed by the local business men. Prizes were awarded to 84 Rusk County farmers. Approximately, \$6000 and about \$1500 worth in prizes were raised in and out of the county. Attending the closing day celebration were men of State and national reputation who took part in programs of the day.

"Results from the 1920 land clearing project can be summed up as follows:

1. Over 7,000 acres of land cleared. An increase of 115 per cent over 1919.
2. The valuation of the county was increased by at least \$600,000
3. The increased acreage cleared before July 1st, 1920 produced a crop valued at \$250,000
4. The dynamite consumption was increased by 115 per cent which of course pleased the dealers.
5. The publicity received by the county due to the novelty of the project brought many new settlers to the county.

#The increased valuation due to the land cleared was the equal of adding to the county a new township of the average size and average 1919 value of the townships. Commercial clubs often endeavor to bring new factories to the cities. The land cleared in Rusk County in 1920 from the viewpoint of labor, employed and increased business, is equivalent of a factory working 300 days a year employing 400 men. If the entire 7,000 acres cleared in 1920 are planted to potatoes in 1921, the crop will be worth \$525,000 if potatoes are worth fifty cents per bushel. It will also require 1,500 cars to ship this increased crop.

"In nineteen counties in Upper Wisconsin 412,200 pounds of TNT, 729,300 pounds of dynamite have been used in clearing up 16,376 acres of new land."

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